From: Josh Cochin
To: Devereux, Jan
Subject: Boycott Vote at the April 23rd Council Meeting
Date: Sunday, April 15, 2018 8:30:05 PM

Dear Vice Mayor Devereux,

I am writing to you to tell you of my opposition to efforts being brought before the council to boycott HP and demonize Israel at the behest of the BDS movement. Cambridge has always declared itself to be a welcoming place which does not tolerate prejudice and hate. I am counting on you to show this side of Cambridge, of which the boycott proponents are clearly ignorant. I believe that adopting such a measure would be prejudicial to Cambridge and counter to our shared Cantabrigian values.

The Cambridge City Council should not abdicate its responsibilities to an interest group whose purpose is to demonize Israel. Any resolution of this kind deserves a full and fair public hearing, including inviting experts and interested parties to weigh in openly before action is taken.

Singling out Israel and HP, amongst all the nations, companies and conflicts in the world, and holding them to a unique ethical standard raises troubling issues about the Cambridge City Council. Thousands of American companies are working overseas and engaged in transactions that can be tied to questionable human rights practices; including numerous companies with Cambridge contacts.

In this instance, the Council is overlooking scores of other situations and electing to support dubious and largely unexamined claims against Israel made by an outside organization. If the Cambridge City Council elected to adopt a foreign policy that it applied without prejudice to nations and companies around the world, the issue of an ethical double standard would not be raised.

The BDS movement is detrimental to achieving peace. The establishment of a Palestinian state is a goal we share but will not be realized by extreme and deceptive claims that belie the hard reality on the ground. There are many people of goodwill, who are working to bridge the divide between Israelis and Palestinians. Boycotts, like the one under consideration, undermine these peacemakers, fuel polarization, and strengthen the hands of those who reject co-existence.

Sincerely,

Josh Cochin
463 Huron Ave